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ABSTRACT

Foreign language teaching assistant (TA) training is affected by structures and hierarchies at all institutional levels, but it is most immediately influenced by the discipline-specific practices of departments of national languages and literatures, practices that are rooted both in the broader history of TA education and in the tension between literary/cultural studies and the teaching of language. The ideological and disciplinary orientations that dominated the field during the time when teaching assistants became a standard form of financial aid had a great impact on assumptions about the purposes of language study and teacher training, the role of language teachers, including TAs, and the relationship between language study and other areas of inquiry housed within departments of national languages and literatures. To help graduate students achieve productive integration in their research with their teaching and to bring academic substance to the teaching of languages, it is essential to address the ways in which formal structures surrounding the field reflect and reproduce long-standing tensions in language teaching--tensions that can only undermine efforts to go beyond reductive "skills and drills" in efforts to build congruent, intellectually-grounded curricula and teacher education programs. (Contains 35 references.) (Author/VWL)

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New Paradigms, Old Practices: Disciplinary Tensions in TA Training

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When former MLA president Elaine Marks (1993) decried the quality of TA preparation in foreign languages, she echoed a dissatisfaction that many of us have heard or perhaps even voiced. She suggested that the training of graduate students for teaching may have "developed in unfortunate ways, substituting methodology for linguistic, literary, and cultural content and drills and skills for the kind of understanding that might come from a greater awareness of the complexities of transreferential relations, the affective and intellectual dimensions of language learning, and the pleasures of wordplay" (p. 3). Her criticism, however discouraging it may be to those of us who direct language programs and train teachers, is not entirely unfounded. The way we train TAs is inextricably bound up in the way we teach foreign languages to undergraduates; and as von Hoene (1995) points out, when "skills" are emphasized in language classes to the exclusion of the broader content issues that language study raises, there is little immediate reason for TAs to see a connection between the critical skills they learn in their graduate studies and the work they do in the classroom. Lacking that connection, TA training risks becoming a matter of techniques, routines, and activities rather than an in-depth study of the potential of the language classroom for transformative education.

But in another sense, Marks' criticism is problematic; for in viewing TA training only in terms of content, she appears to overlook the extent to which current practices of TA training are conditioned by a historical and administrative context that circumscribes the choices and—at least to an extent—orients the priorities of those responsible for the training. Foreign language TA training is, of course, affected by structures and hierarchies at all institutional levels; but it is most

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immediately influenced by the discipline-specific practices of departments of national languages and literatures, practices that are rooted both in the broader history of TA education and in the tension between literary/cultural studies and the teaching of language. The ideological and disciplinary orientations that dominated the field during the time when teaching assistantships became a standard form of financial aid had a great impact on our assumptions about the purposes of language study and teacher training, the role of language teachers, including TAs, and the relationship between language study and other areas of inquiry housed within departments of national languages and literatures. These perspectives were translated into practices that remain in place today, despite important shifts in the fundamental paradigms of language teaching. As we seek to help graduate students achieve a productive integration of their research with their teaching and to bring academic substance to the teaching of languages, the question is not simply one of designing more substantive TA training courses, although this is certainly a crucial task. We must also address the ways in which the formal structures surrounding our work reflect and reproduce longstanding tensions in language teaching—tensions that can only undermine our best efforts to go beyond reductive "skills and drills" in our efforts to build congruent, intellectually-grounded curricula and teacher education programs.

The Development of TA Training in Foreign Languages

The notion that TA training should prepare graduate students for entry into a profession is in fact relatively new. While TAs were part of the American educational scene by the mid nineteenth century, it was the influx of students after World War II that made the system standard practice in American research universities. Universities were quick to see the advantages of offering TA support to attract graduate students and at the same time to hold down the cost of undergraduate instruction, but they were somewhat slower to recognize the need for training and supervision of the TAs' work. By 1970, critics of American education were complaining that the TA system exploited TA labor, increased the time to degree without adding to professional competence, and provided insufficient training and oversight (Chase 1970). At the same time, many undergraduates and parents believed that the quality of undergraduate education was suffering, as professors turned over their teaching obligations to graduate assistants.

Foreign language departments—perhaps because of the need for close articulation within course sequences and among small class sections—were relatively quick to establish TA training programs. A 1966

MLA survey of 52 foreign language departments (MacAllister 1966) revealed that only 40% had some form of TA training, however minimal it might be. By 1978, by contrast, Schulz found that 78% of foreign language, linguistics, and comparative literature departments reported that they provided development programs for TAs. Yet for another decade, scholarly discussion of TA training across disciplines remained limited, and it focused on the inculcation of idealized, discipline-specific teaching behaviors. It was not until the 1990s that broader professional development, aimed at preparing TAs for a career in teaching rather than focusing narrowly on the courses they teach as graduate students, became a major theme in the literature related to TA training (Chism 1998).

In the past decade a number of writers have critiqued the limited agenda of TA training programs in foreign language departments. Azevedo (1990) distinguished between TA "training" (aimed at preparing graduate students for their immediate duties as TAs) and "education" (aimed at preparing them for a broader career in the teaching of language, literature, and culture). Freed and Bernhardt (1992) argue that the training of TAs all too often proceeds in accordance with the "factory model" of education, providing TAs with methods rather than with a theoretical grounding and treating them as technicians rather than as "reflective practitioners." In their survey of 41 institutions, Gorell and Cubillos (1993) found that most of the training programs they studied were aimed primarily towards preparing TAs to fulfill their functions as graduate teaching assistants rather than to make the curricular and pedagogical decisions that would be required of them as professional teachers of language, literature, and culture. They concluded that "institutions are struggling to deal with two apparently divergent goals: institutional necessity (the demands of specific basic language courses) and professional desiderata (the individual needs of the graduate TAs defined in terms of foreign language pedagogy)" (p. 101). Lalande (1990), Barnett and Cook (1992), Rifkin (1992), and Pons (1993) have proposed expanded models of teacher training to educate TAs for a career beyond the immediate needs of their institutions. Kinginger (1995) and von Hoene (1995) argued that TA training programs should integrate a more theoretical component that prepares TAs to exploit the classroom's potential for negotiating cross-cultural difference and dealing with interrelated issues of language, culture, and identity.

Despite our concern for the duration, content, methods, and goals of TA training programs, however, we have devoted little or no attention to the structural framework within which the programs operate. Yet the TA experience—including explicit instruction, classroom

experience, interactions with colleagues around issues of pedagogy, the ways in which language teaching is treated and discussed, and the ways in which pedagogical issues enter into or intersect with other domains of graduate study and interactions with other graduate faculty—constitutes an environment where the TA is socialized into a professional culture—or, to use a term proposed by Gee (1990), into a Discourse—of language teaching. Gee defines a Discourse (with a capital "D," distinct from the broader term "discourse") as "a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network' or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful 'role'" (p. 143). Gee maintains that while instruction and/or conscious learning may facilitate meta-knowledge of a Discourse, Discourses must be acquired through "enculturation (apprenticeship) into social practices through scaffolded and supported interaction with people who have already mastered the Discourse" (p. 147). Gee uses the example of linguistics to demonstrate the importance of this process for people entering an academic discipline:

> In an academic discipline like linguistics, you can overtly teach someone (the content knowledge of the discipline of) *linguistics*, which is a body of facts and theories; however, while knowledge of some significant part of these facts and theories is necessary to being a linguist, you cannot overtly teach anyone *to be* (*to behave like*) *a linguist*, which is a Discourse—you can just let them practice being a linguist (apprentice them) with people who are already in the Discourse. A person could know a great deal about linguistics and still not be (accepted as) a linguist (not able to signal membership in the 'club' by the right type of talk, writing, values, attitudes and behaviors). 'Autodidacts' are precisely people who . . . were trained outside a process of group practice and socialization. They are almost never accepted as 'insiders,' 'members of the club (profession, group)' (p. 147).

Using Gee's framework, the culture of language teaching can be seen as a Discourse into which it is our aim to socialize TAs. In this process, the training course *per se* can be expected to have less impact than the totality of social and institutional practices that comprise the graduate students' experience of what it means to be a teacher of foreign language/literature/culture. It follows that if the TAs' day-to-day experience of the Discourse of language teaching is divergent from the declarative knowledge taught in a training course, the course itself will be continually undermined by the understandings that are acquired from the broader context. This is why it is important to look not only

at the content of what we teach graduate teaching assistants about teaching, but also at the context within which they come to experience themselves as teachers.

Educational Ideologies and Disciplinary Divisions

The administrative context of TA training has been shaped in important ways by the ideological and disciplinary currents that prevailed as the TA system and multi-section courses came into widespread practice. Educational practices in the United States have been dominated by nineteenth century Utilitarian ideology (Kinginger 1995; Scollon and Scollon 1995), which places a high value on progress, individuality, rational thought, technology, quantitative measurement, and the production of wealth. In the wake of World War II, these values intersected with the project of language teaching in a particularly critical way. As the American government experienced an increased need for bilingual and multilingual foreign service personnel and diplomats and as American business turned increasingly to overseas markets, language learning came to be seen for the first time as a matter of national interest (Patrikis 1995). Correspondingly, there was an increased insistence on functional skills rather than on knowledge about language or ability to read and interpret literature. It was during this period that the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) swept into immense success in American public education, grounded in behaviorist psychology and structuralist linguistics, and backed by generous allotments of public funding for teacher retraining programs, the production of new teaching materials, etc. The proponents of ALM legitimized their authority by claiming scientific analysis as the basis for understanding—and ultimately teaching—language. This position was necessarily accompanied by the claim that language should be taught by people with training in applied linguistics and psychology rather than by professors of literature or theoretical linguistics, a claim that had been articulated as early as 1914 by Leonard Bloomfield:

> Nearly all of the elementary language-teaching in our colleges is done . . . by doctors of philosophy who have no training and no ambition in this direction, but find their interest and seek their advancement in linguistic or literary teaching and research. . . . As long as this work is inappropriately left to colleges, these institutions should give employment and promotion to teachers who make it their business, and allow literary and linguistic scholars to stick to their last, for they are no more capable of this work than are grammar-school and high-school teachers of conducting graduate seminars (pp. 298–299).

As the emerging field of applied linguistics struggled for a niche in the academic establishment, a further distinction was drawn between the scientists who produce and articulate empirically-grounded theories of learning and teaching, on the one hand, and the teachers who apply those theories in the classroom, on the other. A widely used methods textbook of the time makes this case as follows:

> A glance at the medical profession should be revealing for the scientifically inclined language teacher. The medical doctor knows physiology, anatomy, chemistry, and bacteriology, but in his practice he does not employ any one of these to the exclusion of the others . . . .
>
> Similarly, the language teacher can not ignore the results of linguistics (the scientific study of language), the psychology of human learning, the age and education of the pupils, or the personality and capacity of the individual student.
>
> A scientific approach to language teaching applies the best that is known to each particular class and its students (Lado 1964, p. 8).

The two-way distinction thus established—between language study and the other academic projects of language departments, on the one hand, and between scholars and teachers, on the other—has had enormous impact on the way language study and language teaching are seen and structured in American universities. Empirically-oriented scholarship in applied linguistics, second language acquisition (SLA), and education has vastly expanded our understanding of how languages are learned and has led to far-reaching changes in teaching practice. Additionally, it has created a pool of professionals with expertise applicable to the development of language curricula, the oversight of programs, and the training of future language educators. At the same time, however, it has accentuated the divergence between language teaching and the study of national literatures/cultures (Patrikis 1995). In fact, if the claims of applied linguists and psychologists in the 1950s and early '60s aimed to professionalize language study and legitimize its place alongside the teaching of literature in language departments, they had, if anything, the opposite effect. The institutionalization of language instruction as a self-contained project, separate from the larger aims of language departments and grounded in the empirical study of language and learning, enabled—and continues to enable—the perception that language study is "just" about mastery of linguistic forms. Simultaneously, it cut language *teachers* out of the very community of scholars it attempted to legitimize. Within the community of literary scholars, where empirical data is less valued than a compelling, elegant, and theoretically-grounded argument

(Kramsch 1998), it is not clear that the status of scholars concerned with language study/learning has been enhanced by their empirical orientation.[1] On the other hand, the trivialization of teachers' work and the sharp demarcation between literature and language have certainly not improved the position of anyone teaching language or training language teachers.

In today's foreign language departments, the language-literature division remains institutionalized as what Patrikis calls a "hierarchy of teaching and research" (p. 298), where language and teaching are subordinate to literature and research. Patrikis has argued that the separation of language and literature, along with the hierarchy it supports, has grave consequences for the overall academic quality of language programs and curricula and ultimately for the potential robustness of language departments. The multi-section language program, where one faculty member is solely responsible for a relatively self-contained program that encompasses elementary language instruction and TA education, separating these from all the other activities of an academic department, instantiates and institutionalizes the language-literature split.

The Multi-Secti Program

The multi-section program structure, as I have described it, became widespread at about the same time that ALM was the prevailing methodology in language teaching, that undergraduate enrollments were increasing dramatically, and that the availability of TA support for graduate students made possible the rapid growth of graduate programs. In 1966 the Modern Language Association sponsored a conference on the preparation of college teachers of modern foreign languages. In its report (MacAllister 1966), the Conference recommended that elementary foreign language classes adopt a schedule ensuring one contact hour per day and suggested one of two possible arrangements to meet this requirement: "a. autonomous classes or sections usually meeting five days a week with the same instructor; and b. lecture-demonstrations accompanied by drill. In the latter type, the sections meet as a whole three times a week on alternate days under the course director and are then subdivided into small drill groups, also meeting three times a week" (p. 404). The report also calls for language courses to be taught by "skilled and experienced teachers instead of the untrained and inexperienced teaching assistants who, as the MLA questionnaire revealed, do 80% to 90% of this difficult and sensitive teaching without supervision in some of our largest universities" (p. 404).

Comparing these recommendations to multi-section course delivery today, one sees a curious mix of choices. The administrative needs of departments and institutions—i.e., to attract and support promising graduate students—appears to have outweighed the MLA recommendation that language teaching be assigned to experienced faculty. On the other hand, the one-hour-a-day schedule for beginning language instruction did become a dominant format, with the multi-section course providing a framework for consistency among sections and allowing for supervision and training of graduate student instructors. The lecture-discussion format, a common mode of delivery in many disciplines, became the rare exception rather than the rule in foreign languages. Cost may have been a factor in this tendency; but additionally, the multi-section format generates support for graduate students and allows large enrollments without requiring a significant engagement on the part of most faculty.

At a time when language teaching was viewed less as an academic pursuit than as a matter of putting into practice a prescribed methodology, there was little reason for most faculty to see teaching language classes as a valuable use of their time or to doubt that a beginning graduate student, with the minimal training and supervision that one faculty member can provide for a large number of TAs, could perform adequately in a language classroom. There was equally little reason to question the view of language study and literary/cultural scholarship as distinct projects, one hierarchically subordinate to the other. Finally, there was no reason to question whether training TAs to teach in a multi-section course would provide them with an adequate basis for a career in teaching, since at the time TA training was not perceived as preparation for anything more than teaching the department's language classes. From today's perspective, the multi-section course structure continues to meet institutional needs economically by delivering instruction to large numbers of students with minimal faculty. For better or for worse, it also allows the majority of faculty members in a language department to focus on their areas of specialization without the distraction of language instruction. On the other hand, at a time when our understanding of language acquisition and teaching is undergoing significant change and there is an increasing openness to programs that fruitfully integrate linguistic and literary/cultural goals, multi-section courses are relatively resistant to change and perpetuate the language-literature dichotomy, as we shall see.

The resistance of the multi-section course to radical change is largely a function of the complex organization required to set it up and keep it running smoothly. The labor required to coordinate multiple levels of a language program and multiple sections of each level—

including methodological orientation, textbook selection, support materials for TAs, assessment strategies and materials, audio-visual and digital components, etc.—makes it virtually impossible to make major changes in an established program in a short time. This is not to say that innovation is impossible; but the program's underlying goals and assumptions tend to remain unquestioned once a program is in place. This unwieldiness is both reflected in and intensified by the commodification of foreign language instruction in the textbook industry, where publishers compete for the sale of integrated foreign language "packages" that include grammar instruction, workbooks, instructor's manuals, reading texts, writing exercises, culture modules, audio programs, CD-ROM programs, websites, etc. As Ariew (1982) and Kramsch (1988) have pointed out, foreign language textbooks tend to espouse whatever methods and goals are dominant at a given time, avoid potentially controversial topics, and reflect the ideology and cultural assumptions of the consumer culture rather than that of the target culture. As "products of a homogenizing process" (Ariew, p.12), they do not easily lend themselves to adaptation to the needs and goals of specific programs or student populations, nor can they easily be adapted to fit goals, models of learning, or methodologies other than those for which they were developed. However, competition for the lucrative multi-section course market is fierce; and publicity for instructional packages often makes the claim, explicitly or implicitly, that the program is complete enough and well-enough organized to be taught by inexperienced teachers. From this it seems clear that the attractiveness of the multi-section market encourages the production of formulaic textbooks which, in their turn, contribute to the difficulty of innovation at a fundamental level within language programs.

The role of the language program director raises another set of problems with respect to multi-section courses. Without belaboring the issues that others (e.g., Dvorak 1986; Lee and VanPatten 1991; Lalande 1991) have raised concerning the program director's position in a department, I believe it is important to recognize how the construction of this position entrenches the separation of language study from the study of literature and culture and, as a consequence, how it affects the training of TAs. Patrikis distinguishes between coordinator positions that are created "to bring new academic expertise and professional vitality to a department" and those whose purpose is "to relieve the rest of the department of the responsibility of participating in and of being concerned with the language program . . ." (1995, p. 313). The multi-section course format institutionalizes precisely the second of these models by making the language program the sole and permanent responsibility of a single individual who is distinguished

from other faculty not only by having a different area of expertise but also by having a different function in the department.

Kramsch (1995) puts her finger on a central dilemma facing language program directors when she points out that despite the expertise for which they are ostensibly hired, their positions are viewed as essentially administrative rather than academic. The language program director is responsible for seeing to it that language programs run smoothly and efficiently, leaving students generally satisfied with their courses and TAs generally satisfied with the training and support they receive. As instructor of record for language classes, the director is fundamentally responsible for any problems, including quality of instruction, workload, grading standards and procedures, and fairness of grading practices. This kind of responsibility for the satisfaction and the performance of others, especially when novice TAs enter the classroom for the first time with no more preparation than a week (or even a single day) of pre-service training, militates precisely for a formulaic approach to teacher training that supplies TAs with a set repertoire of easily taught and easily applied teaching strategies, thus limiting the potential for problems.

The managerial expectations placed on program directors make it difficult for them to maintain an active engagement with the intellectual currents that are important to their colleagues. In the absence of shared scholarly commitments, the distance between language coordinators and their colleagues and between language programs and the broader language/literature curriculum tends to increase. Acknowledging the tension between administrative responsibility and academic pursuits and recognizing the importance of the program director's intellectual life for the overall health and vitality of language programs, Kramsch offers the following advice:

> If program directors want to teach their TAs how to let go of controlling their classes without abdicating their responsibility as educators, they have to model that stance themselves. One way to do that is to be less concerned with controlling the effectiveness and managerial competencies of their TAs, and more interested in their own intellectual growth and well-being (1995, p. xxiii).

Kramsch's point is well taken; but it is also important to recognize the full weight of institutional disincentives facing language program directors who might choose to loosen their control on language programs and TA training in order to invest in their own intellectual development. For it is precisely on the basis of their administrative skill—their ability to keep things running smoothly, to support the TAs and minimize the burden that teaching places on their graduate

studies, to deliver instruction to undergraduates efficiently—that they are evaluated for advancement and, in many cases, continued employment. In a survey of 63 language program directors, Ervin (1991) found that just under half had tenure or the equivalent, and few were ladder-rank faculty. When respondents were asked what characteristics they considered important to their on-the-job success, the qualities most commonly cited were rapport with colleagues, professional ethics and discretion, knowledge of teaching methods, teaching ability, and a high degree of fluency in the target language coupled with knowledge of the target culture. Scholarship was not mentioned. Thus, for the great majority of language program directors who do not hold ladder positions, to follow Kramsch's advice is risky business. Their intellectual development is unlikely to bring institutional recognition or reward, while decreased attention to the smooth and efficient functioning of their programs could cost them the approval of their colleagues and students and even jeopardize the tenuous security of their positions.

Emerging Paradigms for Language Study

The structures I have been discussing are supported in part by a perception of language as a definable (even if imperfectly defined) set of behaviors that can be taught as discrete skills or areas of competence. In general, language study has also proceeded on the premise that its primary value lies less in its inherent worth than in its utility as a preparation for other pursuits—travel, career needs, the study of literature, etc. Both of these assumptions have been brought into question as insights from post-colonial theory, feminist theory, and cultural criticism begin to influence our understanding of the project of language study. A growing number of educators today believe that the mission of foreign language education extends beyond performance of language acts and should include reflection upon the ways in which culturally situated discourse systems create and reproduce social as well as individual meanings. While these scholars represent a variety of orientations and perspectives, and while their positions do not dictate methodologies, their insights offer the possibility of fundamentally new ways to conceptualize what we do as language teachers.

Swaffar (1999), for example, defines foreign language study as "a discipline with four subfields (language, literature, linguistics, and culture) that asks the question, How do individuals and groups use words and other sign systems in context to intend, negotiate, and create meanings" (p. 6)? In her view, the goal of language study—at all levels of the curriculum—is "to enable students to do things with

words and to recover what has been done with words, socially, historically, politically, and interpersonally" (p. 6). Kramsch (1993a, 1993b, 1995) has argued persuasively that a transformative pedagogy of language requires that we redefine the very borders of foreign language study. She views language study as "initiation into a kind of social practice that is at the boundary of two or more cultures" (1993a, p. 9) and suggests that "teaching language as communication means teaching the way language both reflects and creates the social power relations, mindsets, and worldviews of speakers and writers within specific discourse communities" (1995, p. xxiv). In a similar vein, Kern (1995) offers a reconceptualization of foreign language literacy that goes beyond normative essayist standards and views literacy as a set of socially, historically, and culturally situated discursive practices. As Kern explains:

> From an "active literacy" perspective . . . language learning is not the acquisition of discrete, decontextualized skills, but an apprenticeship in new social practices—an encounter with new values, norms, and world views—partly through exposure to and experience with new literacy practices (p. 78).

Kinginger (1995) has pointed out that socially situated perspectives on language study fly in the face of the assessment-driven and utilitarian values of American education. More to the point for us is that these perspectives also run counter to many of the assumptions that underlie current practices in language study. They assume the inherent value of language study rather than viewing it primarily as a preparation for travel, diplomacy, business, or advanced language/literature study. Additionally, by taking culture as a central concern and viewing language as social practice, they bring language study into closer alignment with the projects of other disciplines and offer language specialists the possibility of closer engagement with colleagues in literature and other related fields (Kramsch 1995). This opens the way not only for productive collaborations in the areas of curriculum and program development, but also for interdisciplinary research that enriches both SLA and literary-cultural studies (Kramsch 1998). Finally, emerging conceptions of language, culture, and literacy are incompatible with a pedagogy that can be reduced to a step-by-step method or a collection of techniques and strategies, as Kramsch points out:

> American educational culture puts a high premium on the management of learning, on methodology, and on procedure. But cultural understanding, unlike discrete points of linguistic knowledge, does not

> develop from well-designed maps and fool-proof instructions that lead the student through the forest of foreign meanings. It thrives on speculation, on successful and unsuccessful attempts to bring isolated facts and events into relation with one another, on multiple perspectives and interpretations, on a sensitivity to ambiguity, and on the search for meaning itself (1988, p. 85).

The kind of teaching that Kramsch is suggesting here is not easily amenable to training in the sense suggested by Azevedo (1990). Overall, it tends to reduce the relative importance of classroom procedures (drills, group activities, conversational exercises, etc.) and to increase the importance of a critical awareness of the complex interrelationships between linguistic performance, social practice, and cultural production. In resisting purely procedural approaches to the teaching of foreign languages, the emerging paradigms also resist the conventional construction of language teachers as technicians and reposition them as scholar-teachers whose mission is not merely to train students in discrete skills but to introduce them to new ways of experiencing language, culture, nationality, and identity. But this shift also complicates the preparation of future faculty within the conventional structures of today's universities.

Implications for TA Training

If "well-designed maps and foolproof instructions" are inadequate for teaching students to understand the cultural resonances and social embeddedness of language, it is equally true that the institutional context of TA training is ill-designed to support a training program informed by the new paradigms. For example, von Hoene has suggested that theoretical perspectives from postcolonialism, feminist studies, psychoanalysis, etc. might usefully "be put in a productive dialogue with [second language acquisition issues usually discussed in TA development] to see where we might rethink and revise current practices" (1995, p. 51). However, the unwieldiness of the multi-section course structure and its resistance to change complicate this task. By engaging our TAs in reading and discussion of multiple perspectives on language and language study in this way, we must (if we practice what we preach) constantly call into question the underpinnings of our own programs. This is incontestably a good thing, but it puts immense pressure on language program directors who have generally invested enormous energy in constructing their programs. It is relatively easy to experiment with changes at a superficial level (a new book, a different approach to writing, the integration of Web-based work or a

CD-ROM, etc.), but fundamental changes in the aims, orientation, and underlying assumptions of a course cannot easily be carried out section by section or as a short-term experiment. It is not surprising that graduate students rarely have the opportunity to participate, for example, in a fundamental reconceptualization of a language course such as that reported by Chaput (1993, 1996) or Byrnes (1999), where TAs were involved with faculty in articulating overall program goals and then designing course content and materials to support them. Within the cumbersome structure of multi-section courses, program directors are caught between the options of teaching only material that supports their curricular choices, teaching multiple perspectives and a flexibility that they are not willing or able to practice in a sustained way, or engaging in the Sisyphean task of constant critique and revision of their complex programs, at an inevitable cost in terms of the time they can invest in intellectual explorations of their own.

Beyond the content of the training course, however, there remains the larger and more critical problem suggested by Gee's work on Discourses—that is, the question of how graduate students are socialized into a professional culture that includes both research and teaching. The culture of foreign language departments is characterized almost universally by the separation of language teaching from the study of national literatures and cultures, with language being at a lower hierarchical position than literature/culture, as revealed by the differentiated structure of the language program and the differentiated status and responsibilities of its director. No matter how seriously a department takes its language program and no matter how well a program director is integrated within the faculty, the distinction between the two spheres of responsibility is clear; and it conveys inescapably to graduate students that the work they do in their courses (research/literature) is of a fundamentally different order from the work they do in the classroom (teaching/language). In this context language study continues to be positioned as "skill training," and the language teacher is constructed as a practitioner rather than a scholar. Thus, the daily experience of graduate students in a department of foreign language is perpetually at odds with the emerging paradigms for language study. Like the linguist in Gee's example, our TAs may be instructed in a way of thinking about language teaching that challenges worn assumptions; but as long as the institutional practices based on those assumptions remain unchanged, the TAs' lived experience will undermine the content of our training.

Clearly, if we are serious about educating TAs for a career in language teaching, we need to go beyond training in methods and techniques. We need to help graduate students discover the interrelatedness

of research and teaching and to bring their abilities as scholars of literature and culture—along with a knowledge of contemporary theories of language acquisition and education—to bear on their practice of language teaching. Ultimately, this requires not just an expanded training course, but a significant shift in institutional culture and practices. The most critical aspect of such a shift is bridging the language-literature split as instantiated in the division of labor now practiced, thus working against the interrelated perceptions of language teaching as skill training and of language teachers as practitioners of received knowledge. To accomplish this, departments will need to reconceptualize the organization of the language program, the practice of making a language program director exclusively responsible for it, and the nature of the program director's responsibilities. Language/pedagogy specialists—whether they are hired as program directors or not—must have both the opportunity and the incentive for research and intellectual growth as well as the opportunity to contribute actively to a department beyond the narrow confines of the language program.

At the same time, the expertise of other faculty might fruitfully contribute to both the teaching of language and the training of TAs. We might, for example, experiment with alternatives to the multi-section program, perhaps revisiting the lecture-discussion mode[2] that is commonly employed in other disciplines. A lecture-discussion format might offer greater flexibility than the multi-section model, while allowing a sharing of duties among language/pedagogy specialists and other faculty. This would enable TAs to work with various faculty members over time, giving them the opportunity to see a variety of approaches and perspectives in practice. An experiment along these lines is reported by Braun and Robb (1990), who describe elementary/intermediate courses in French, German, and Spanish taught by two-person teams, each consisting of one regular faculty member and one TA. Taking inspiration from this experiment, one might consider a team-taught structure that draws on both the program director's knowledge of linguistics, pedagogy, and second language acquisition and the expertise of other faculty in literary/cultural analysis.

The integration of scholarship and teaching can also be practiced and modeled through the formal training of TAs. Barnett and Cook (1992) report on a professional development course for graduate students, taught jointly by a language program director and a professor of medieval literature. The course dealt with issues both in teaching and in research, focusing on areas of convergence between the two. The instructors aimed to "present scholarship globally, as research and teaching together, with attention to theory and practice, general and particular, principles and goals, just as any other set of intellectual

notions and their applications are properly taught" (p. 90). Thus, students are not only encouraged to see their own work in an integrated way but also are shown an active model of that kind of fruitful integration in the collaborative work of their instructors.

A curriculum revision project reported by Byrnes (1999) takes another approach to bridging the language-literature dichotomy in TA training. Here the language program supervisor teaches the TA methods class, but other faculty take part in TA development in a variety of ways: by participating in reciprocal observations with TAs and other faculty, by serving as mentors to TAs, by serving as level coordinators, and by participating in the ongoing development of new courses and updating of continuing ones. The curriculum project itself is noteworthy in that no distinction is made between "language" and "content" courses; rather, the entire curriculum is envisioned as a content-based course of study that supports students' continued language development across all levels of instruction. TAs thus both witness and participate in a close integration of linguistic, cultural, and literary goals for instruction at all levels. At the same time, they encounter and engage with diverse perspectives on pedagogy through working with a cross-section of faculty members.

Beyond their formal training, of course, TAs encounter a variety of pedagogies in their graduate courses—a fact Marks (1993) cites as a counterweight to what she views as the triviality of TA methods courses. But whether or not Marks is correct in assuming that the quality of teaching in graduate courses is reliably superior to that of elementary language classes, it is far from clear that what graduate students learn in their classes—even with the best teachers—translates into conscious principles or insights that can then be applied to the practice of language teaching. However, one might imagine a departmental policy that encourages graduate professors to devote some part of their class time to making explicit their pedagogies and discussing the interrelationships between their theoretical and literary perspectives, on the one hand, and their teaching practices, on the other. Just as graduate students encounter and work with a variety of critical approaches and perspectives, the occasional explicit discussion of the pedagogical perspectives of their professors would provide them with a broader view of teaching than any one faculty member alone can provide. It would also demonstrate the faculty's commitment to an integrated mission of teaching and scholarship at all levels of the curriculum.

The initiatives described above are small but significant steps towards a process of rethinking, at an institutional level, the assumptions that have oriented our profession for half a century. The kind of

change I am suggesting may not come easily, either for literature faculty or for language specialists, for we have accommodated ourselves to existing structures for all or most of our professional lives. For faculty in literature/culture, breaking down the barrier between language programs and the larger curriculum will imply some degree of attentiveness to, or engagement with, areas of activity that have formerly been relegated to the language program director. For program directors, it involves giving up some of the exclusive control we have traditionally enjoyed over the language program. It may require that we rethink our own positions with respect to the interrelationships among language, literature, and culture and between theory/research and application/teaching. For many of us, it will also require crossing disciplinary boundaries in order to acquire some understanding of the theoretical discourse of our colleagues and to consider how that discourse might inform our programs and our pedagogies. Ultimately, however, we cannot make the context of TA training convergent with the content of what we teach unless we are willing to make that effort.

Conclusion

A great deal has changed since the growth of the TA system and the advent of multi-section programs made TA training and specialized program directors desirable in departments of national languages, literatures, and cultures. Language study, especially in the light of emerging paradigms, is no longer limited to the mastery of correct form and appropriate usage but is seen increasingly as a site for cross-cultural encounter and discovery. Teachers are no longer expected to be mere practitioners of a prescribed methodology but must be able to draw on diverse areas of scholarship in order to help their students discover the challenge and the pleasures of learning a foreign way to speak, to think, and to view the world. Finally, the training of graduate teaching assistants is no longer seen only as a way to ensure coherence and uniform standards within language programs, but has become established as an important part of TAs' professional development. Yet we continue to train our TAs within institutional structures predicated on the separateness of language study from the other academic pursuits of a department, on the opposition of teaching to scholarship, and on a reductive view of language study as skill acquisition. In so doing we enable the continued trivialization of language instruction, and we miss the opportunity to help graduate students see the potential for productive relationships between their graduate research and their teaching. If TA training is to be congruent with the cultural context in which it takes place (and it must be, if our work is

not to be constantly undermined), we must actively seek to challenge and change the structures and practices that are incompatible with the content of what we teach. We owe nothing less to our graduate students and to the undergraduates they teach.

Notes

1. This assertion might be challenged on grounds that MLA job listings in the recent past show a slight increase in tenure-track hires in Second Language Acquisition or Applied Linguistics. This evidence, however, must be interpreted with caution. Before claiming that departments are becoming more open to specialists in these areas, we would need to know more about the kinds of scholars eventually hired to fill these positions—and, more importantly, whether they do in fact receive tenure.
2. In considering a lecture-discussion format, I am not suggesting that we return to the model in which a faculty member conducts lectures on grammar and usage and TAs conduct drill sections. Rather, I imagine an approach that allows TAs and faculty to work collaboratively, integrating cultural and literary perspectives as well as helping students develop communicative and social ability in the language.

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